

Approved For Release 2005/04/12 : CIA-RDP79-01147A000100020003-3

CONTRIBUTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF GEOGRAPHERS IN THE
EUROPE-AFRICA FIELD *file*

The contribution of geographers to work in the Europe-
ca field has been less than might have been anticipated
for two chief reasons. First, there were before the war very
few of the American geographers who had developed any
specialized competence on Europe; and second, those few who
had pursued research studies in European problems were either
unsuited for employment in OSS because of age and salary
status, or, were assigned in OSS to higher
administrative posts. The story of the geographical con-
tribution in this field, therefore, is written around the
attempt to build a research staff at a relatively lower
level for the collection and organization of so-called
topographic intelligence -- that is, of detailed information
concerning specific areas. The ~~higher~~ type of geographic
analysis, which requires regional specialization, has been *largely*

Approved For Release 2005/04/12 : CIA-RDP79-01147A000100020003-3

- 2 -

I. BEGINNINGS

During the summer of 1941 when the Office of the Coordinator of Information was first brought together, the chief effort was devoted to the gathering of personnel. The first geographer to be asked to join the new agency was

25X1 [redacted] who was assigned to the post of chief of

the Latin American Section, Division of Special Information.

His opinion was requested regarding other geographers for other regional fields, and he was asked by the director to undertake the establishment of a Geographic Division which, like the Economic Division, was to serve all the several regional fields. He immediately secured the services of

25X1 [redacted] as chief of the Geographic Division, and

after the arrival of the latter in Washington frequent conferences were held regarding the selection of suitable geographic personnel for the various parts of the branch.

- 3 -

At this time, with the exception of [REDACTED]

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the Russian Section, and several persons in the Latin American Section, the other geographers who joined the OSS were placed in the Geographic Division. As a result the several sections of the Division of Special Information which later were brought together in the Europe-Africa Division were left entirely without geographers.

II. BASIC BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Nov. 1941 to Jan. 1943

In the Geographic Division a Reports Section was established under the able leadership of [REDACTED]

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Into this section were brought several very capable young men, including [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The salaries offered to these men, based on the salaries they were receiving at their universities plus an additional amount to take care of increased living expenses in Washington, were considerably less than the same men were offered in other agencies. For example, one of them

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was offered \$3800 in the Board of Economic Warfare but came to the Office of the Coordinator of Information for \$2600 -- chiefly because of his belief that this was the agency in which the best opportunity for a real geographic contribution could be found. The result was the concentration in this section of several excellent men who were attracted more by the opportunities for geographical work than by the salaries.

At first the work of the section was largely devoted to the compilation of data for maps, many of them in the European field. The first reports prepared by this section were in the field of climate. The earliest reports, also, were mostly on Far Eastern subjects. The Reports Section, however, was called upon to prepare sections of the Soldier's Handbooks, the first of which was on England. This section was also charged by the Hydrographic Office with the preparation of a Port Encyclopedia of the World, and certain ports in South Africa were actually completed, after which the work was dropped. Preliminary studies were also made

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- 5 -

on Corsica, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Reports Section cooperated with the African Section in the preparation of certain parts of the Morocco Report.

III. REORGANIZATION

Jan. to Jun. 1943

When the Branch was reorganized as a part of OSS in January 1943 the several European and African sections of the former Division of Special Information were placed in the new Political Subdivision of the Europe-Africa Division. In part with the hope of effecting a closer integration of the work of political analysts, economists, and geographers, the division was also organized to include an Economic Subdivision and a Geographic Subdivision (at first known as a Topographic Intelligence Subdivision). Most of the personnel of the old Reports Section were transferred to this new Topographic Intelligence Subdivision of Europe-Africa under the leadership of

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- 6 -

The work assigned to this part of the Division was mainly in the field of topographic intelligence. The so-called TI Studies brought together and presented in concise form great quantities of information selected because of its importance in strategic planning. The TI studies were the precursors and models for the later JANIS studies. The main subjects covered in a TI Study were: terrain, climate, landing beaches, ports, railroads, roads, inland waterways, airfields, communications, utilities, resources, cities and towns, industries, agriculture, health and sanitation, people and government. The last subject was written by the Political Subdivision; all the others were the responsibility of the Geographic Subdivision.

Topographic Intelligence Studies were prepared for several European areas: Brittany, Normandy, the Balearic Islands, Southern France, Sicily, Southern Italy. These studies were described later as one of the most important accomplishments of the Europe-Africa Division.

- 7 -

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In order to provide an organization within the Geographic Subdivision which would be more definitely adapted to work of this sort, the personnel was directed to specialize in specific topics, and sections were established in which groups of related topics were placed under one chief. Sections included the following: Climate-Vegetation Section under Peveril Meigs; Terrain-Hydrography Section under

25X1 [redacted] Transport Routes and Ports Section

25X1 under [redacted] Urban Features and Telecommunications

25X1 Section under [redacted] who was succeeded by [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] respectively; Industrial

25X1 Locations and Local Resources Section under [redacted]

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who transferred from the Latin American Division. Experience indicates without doubt that the most efficient and the most flexible kind of organization for TI work is one which is built on functional lines and in which the personnel can specialize topically.

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- 8 -

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Although the TI Studies represent one of the major contributions of the division, the work was not done under anything approaching ideal conditions. With the same personnel, time, and effort, much better work could have been produced. The conditions were not even so good as those under which ISTD (Oxford) produced the ISIS studies. In the first place, no well-rounded and planned program of TI Studies was set up; instead each study was done hurriedly after the demand for it had been made known. As a result there was not time enough to utilize effectively more than a few of the more accessible sources. The subdivision was never able to build files of basic information. When a study was started the OSS materials were canvassed, and these never provided more than a small fraction of the source material; then the members of the staff attempted to visit and draw on the materials in such other agencies as G-2, ONI, A-2, State, etc., and to interview persons with specialized regional

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knowledge. These time-consuming processes were done hurriedly, permitting coverage of only the most productive sources and the interview of only one or two regional experts. In the second place, the lack of authority sometimes prevented OSS from making use of the most significant items of intelligence, and the lack of representatives in the outposts made it almost impossible to secure new materials from the field. ISTD was better off than OSS on both points: it did have a planned program which permitted more time for collection of data; it did have authority to ask and receive all pertinent data; and it was close enough to the field so that additional field observations -- partly from air photographs -- could be requested and obtained.

IV. INTEGRATED WORK PROGRAMS

June 1943 to date

Beginning in June 1943 the TI Studies done wholly within OSS were abandoned in favor of the cooperative JANIS program, set up under JISPB. OSS assumed responsibility for four

- 10 -

chapters of the JANIS books -- chapters which included almost all the work on such installations as communications, electric power, transportation, utilities, etc., but which excluded all the sections on physical geography. From the beginning the Geographic Subdivision provided the intellectual leadership for the JANIS work. The basic outlines were drawn from the TI studies, and the only man on the JANIS Board who was familiar with methods and standards of TI work was the OSS representative, JANIS studies were started on Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, and France, but only the first one was actually completed and published. In November 1943 the list of priorities was shifted and all the current JANIS work was focused in the Far East.

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Certain of the studies started for JANIS were later utilized in whole or in part for R&A reports. The Albanian and Yugoslav materials on transportation were later completed

- 11 -

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at the request of UNRRA. The Ports of France, originally undertaken at the request of ONI (for ONI, which was responsible for this chapter of JANIS, was unable to do the work), were completed after more than eight months of research under the painstaking direction of

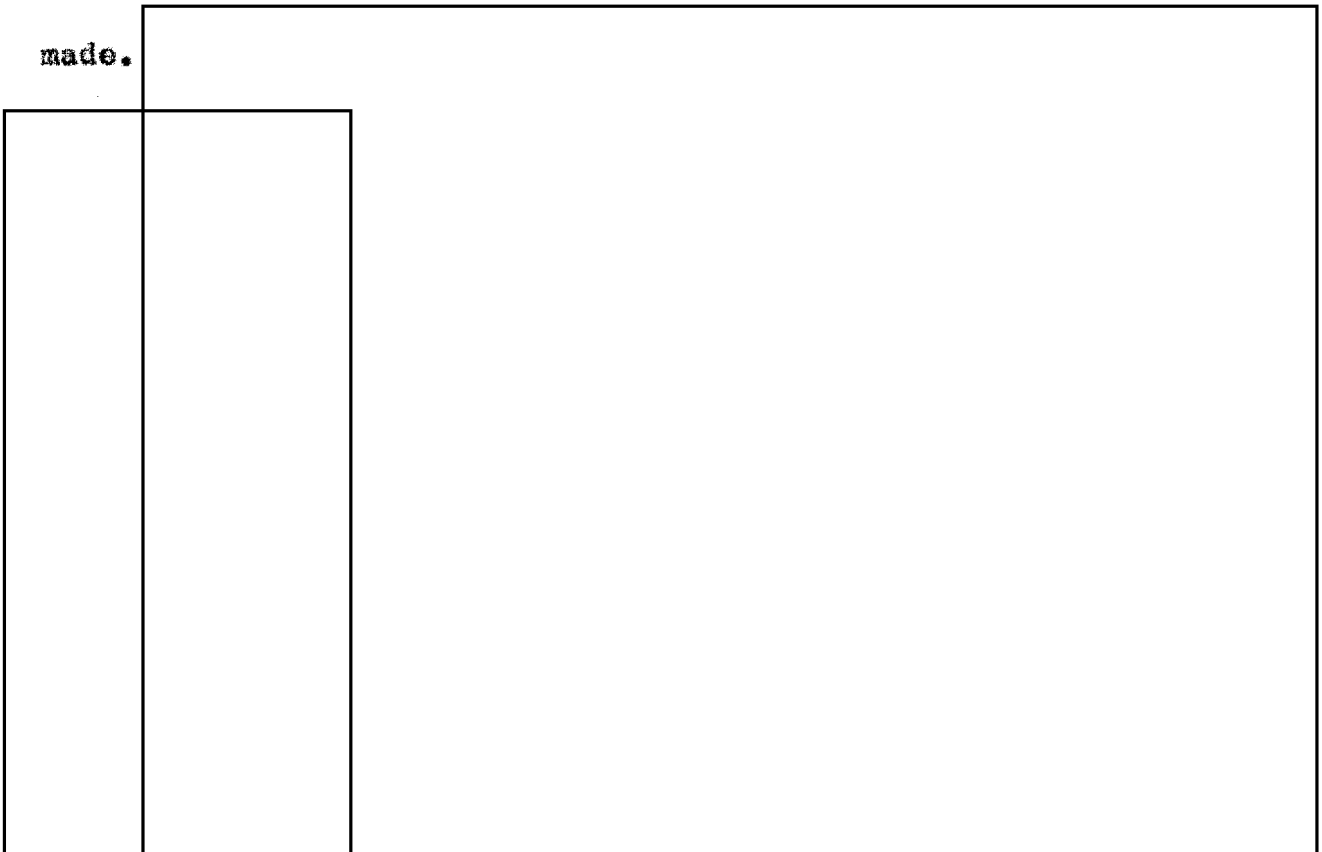
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The text and maps of this report are considered to be another major contribution of the division.

At about this time several changes in personnel were

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made.



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- 12 -

The next integrated program of work in which the Geographic Subdivision was engaged was the program of Civil Affairs handbooks for North Italy and handbooks and guides for Germany as a whole. The subdivision was made responsible for the topics which were previously covered for JANIS, in addition to others -- telecommunications and postal services, railroads, inland waterways, roads and motor transport, gas systems, electric power systems, water supply, German merchant marine. Work on this program continued until early summer of 1944. Although the staff had previously paid chief attention to physical installations and their location, the guide program involved a reorientation of the work toward administrative organization and control. A major criticism of the guide program, from the point of view of the subdivision, was the tendency at first to overlook the specific details of distribution and to be content with generalizations for Germany as a whole.

- 13 -

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The subdivision was never entirely satisfied with this. After the program of studies on Germany had been completed, work was shifted to the preparation of regional guides, in which the specific characteristics of parts of Germany were given proper treatment. The Central Industrial Region was completed in August 1944. In September 1944 a six-volume work on South Germany was issued, which was described in the Paris outpost as one of the most important documents which had been sent to it from Washington. The Ports of Germany were also made the subject of a report similar in outline to the Ports of France.

In the fall of 1944 the Intelligence Photographic Documentation Project necessitated a reorganization of the personnel and administration of the Geographic Subdivision (see Memo II of 15 December 1944, attached).

V. PROBLEMS

As a result of the experience in the Geographic Subdivision several problems have been identified for which adequate

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- 14 -

solutions have yet to be found. These problems are outlined in the following paragraphs.

1. The Problem of Support from the Bureau of the Budget. The case for the Subdivision and the Division has not been successfully presented if one may judge by the results. If the attitude toward the R&A Branch, and especially the Europe-Africa Division, in the European theater of operations could in some manner be transmitted to the Bureau of the Budget, it might help to establish the continuing and even increasing need of intelligence work in this field.

2. The Relation of Geographers to the Division. Ideally geographers, economists, and political analysts should work together intimately on problems and on the collection and evaluation of regional data. Actually the close integration of the three subdivisions has never been accomplished.

- 15 -

3. The Lack of a Planned Work Program. The work program of the Division should be based on a long-range plan which takes into consideration the proper function of R&A as a whole and the probable consumers of the completed reports. Actually no such plan has been set up. Perhaps in part due to the demands of the Bureau of the Budget, and the need for specific work requests, most projects have been started with too little time for careful and well-organized research. Some steps toward this planning problem have been made in the recognition of "Territorial Studies" as a function and responsibility of the Geographic Sub-division.

4. Administrative Organization. As the Branch is now organized the division chiefs only meet with the branch chief. Chiefs of subdivisions have no contacts with the Branch except through the division officers. It is especially necessary, therefore, that the division office

- 16 -

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should hold regular meetings of subdivision and/or section heads for the discussion of the problems of the division and for the dissemination at the lower echelons of the pronouncements of Branch policy issued higher up.

5. Regional vs Functional Organization. It is the opinion of the writer that neither regional nor functional organization is sufficient if followed exclusively. The ideal is an organization that uses both principles. The basic organization might be either functional or regional, with committees formed to provide the opposite type of integration. For example, if the regional organization is basic, then committees formed to handle specific problems might cut across the basic units. Both regional and topical specialists are needed, and their contributions must in some manner be integrated.

6. Personnel. The Geographic Subdivision, like most other parts of R&A has been seriously handicapped by the

- 17 -

application of civil service job classifications and descriptions. However, geographers are perhaps even more handicapped in this respect than economists. The civil service at least thinks it knows what an economist does. For one reason or another the economists in equivalent jobs are generally one grade higher than the geographers. Also, since geographers are so few in number, all but the lower jobs (P-1 to P-3) are filled by persons each of whom is literally unique, and whose job description must be unique in order to make use of his specific abilities. The procedure of fitting a job to a person is exactly opposite to the required civil service procedure which describes jobs first, and then seeks candidates. The subdivision has lost many excellent men to other agencies because of the difficulty of describing a job for them, and because of the relatively low salaries paid to them in their university posts, on which their civil service ratings were in part based.

- 18 -

7. Morale. With a highly specialized staff of scholars, many of them accustomed to the freedom of a university, the morale problem in the Branch as a whole requires special attention. It is the opinion of many persons in the Branch that insufficient attention has been paid to morale. Morale within the Subdivision has, on the whole, been higher than that in certain other parts of R&A, but it still is a problem requiring attention. The solution, for a staff of the type found in R&A, would consist in the regular discussion of Branch policy and plans with persons below the level of division chiefs. To many members of the staff, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] are mythical characters. No staff of people such as those in R&A can work at top efficiency for chiefs they have never seen, and in accordance with plans they do not know about, and for objectives they are left to formulate for themselves.

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